



## Mayor Brindle's Opening Remarks October 29, 2019

Good evening, and thanks to everyone for coming out tonight. I have a few brief updates before we get to the business at hand.

### **UNION COUNTY GRANTS**

Let's start by talking about grants we've received! We got some great news last week from Union County, as we were awarded three grants for projects expected to be completed in 2020:

- \$5,000 from the Greening Union County Grant program to assist in a planting at Memorial Park
- \$30,000 to assist in the replacement of the Sycamore Park playground equipment
- \$22,4000 to assist in a wetlands delineation study for a portion of Tamaques Park

### **MURAL UNDERWAY**

I hope you've had a chance to see the exciting progress on the mural under the NJ Transit underpass near the South Avenue circle. We are thrilled to see this transformative public art project come to life through the amazing work of local artist and business owner Ricardo Roig.

Thanks to the generous donations of the The Presbyterian Church, James Ward of The James Ward Mansion, and an anonymous donor -- in addition to online resident donations and grants from the Main Street NJ and Union County HEART programs -- this exciting project is off and running!

This mural project is only the beginning of a broader strategy for bringing public art in our town, with the formation of a Public Arts Commission to establish a Town-wide public arts vision, in addition to managing contributions and funding.

### **THE WESTFIELD RINK**

It's hard to believe that winter is almost here. As you've probably seen, work has been underway to get The Westfield Rink ready for another fabulous season. Opening day is this Friday, November 1, and we'll have the full schedule up on our website shortly.

I'm proud to report that the Town has been chosen as a winner of the 2019 Innovation in Governance Award for The Westfield Rink. Sponsored by the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, the award highlights successful innovative efforts by a municipality or by partnerships including a municipality. This award recognizes The Westfield Rink as an example of a public/private partnership converting an underutilized town asset into one with community benefit, paid for by a private operator.

Once again, a Westfield Rink Advisory Committee has been formed that will serve as an important body to keep the lines of communication open between residents, the Towns of Westfield and Garwood, and the rink's operator to address any issues as they arise. As we reported earlier this year, many new

measures are being implemented to address aesthetics and noise concerns. I'm optimistic that we'll have a great season for hockey teams, recreational skaters, and other specialized programs that will benefit the entire community, while also striving to be good neighbors. Please come out and support the rink.

### **RECENT EVENTS AROUND TOWN**

Thank you to Lifelong Westfield for hosting last week's safe walking presentation for seniors in Mindowaskin Park with our Police Department. We had more than 30 seniors in attendance, all of whom were provided a free walking safety vest. If any senior is interested in receiving one, they are available free of charge in the Police Department.

Did you make it to "Coffee with a Cop" at Starbucks earlier this month? What a great event! Chief Battiloro and his officers really took "service" to the next level as they put on barista aprons and prepared coffee for everyone. These community events provide a great opportunity for residents to meet with police officers, ask questions, and get to know the men and women who are so dedicated to protecting us every day. Thank you, Chief, for another great event.

### **ADDAMSFEST**

I hope you'll all join me in extending a huge thank you and congratulations to Councilwoman Mackey for another successful AddamsFest! Even bigger and better this year, there really was something for everyone over the last few weeks. I hope you all had the chance to come out and enjoy it -- from the gorgeous Wicked Windows downtown and Haunt Your House entries throughout Westfield, to the fabulous ale garden, art exhibit, movies at the Rialto, lecture series, masquerade ball, and last-minute indoor relocation of the trunk or treat.

I know that Dawn is in the process of extending her thanks to the many people who made this possible, but let me just say a quick thank you to our sponsors, numerous volunteers, and Town employees who took last year's inaugural event to the next level. Our DPW, Fire and Police Departments really outdid themselves, which I heard repeatedly from attendees. The entire spirit of AddamsFest is to embrace a unique part of Westfield's history and make it about community and inclusivity -- and it has clearly grown very quickly into something very special for our Town.

### **BEST DOWNTOWN IN NJ CONTEST**

And speaking of that, Westfield has been selected as one of the top 5 NJ downtowns by NJ.com. I will be giving a tour of our downtown to a reporter from the Star Ledger tomorrow. So if you haven't voted already, please do! And you can vote once a day...so let's do this!

### **MASTER PLAN AND PARKS PLAN**

As I mentioned last time, we are closing in on the end of our year-long Master Plan Re-Examination and Strategic Parks Plan after a community input-driven process. Please join us on December 2 at the Planning Board meeting where the final proposed plan will be presented and adopted.

In addition, the Parks Plan Steering Committee is meeting tomorrow with final recommendations expected by year-end as well. It's a very exciting time as we look to map out the future of Westfield.

**HAPPY HALLOWEEN**

I want to close by wishing everyone a happy and safe Halloween. I know the forecast looks rainy, but that won't stop the kids from trick-or-treating. All drivers and pedestrians should exercise extra caution to ensure everyone's safety on this very busy night.

Thank you!